SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY (Andhra Pradesh): Sir, these nuclear tests are making a mockery of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty which is being sought to be imposed on our country in thousand, subtle, ways.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I entirely agree with the House. Actually, this is the substance of the reference which I have read out just now.

SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA: Whichever country is doing that, we should condemn it.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI (Maharashtra): We should condemn them.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I agree with you. Now, let us take Question No. 141.

SHRI CHAUTRANAN MISHRA: But Mr. Chairman, the reference made by you should have included this thing. Your agreeing to it is another thing.

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): What the Chairman has read out should not be amended. You have raised your voice. But let us not amend it.

प्रो॰ विजय कुमार मल्होत्रा (दिल्ली): चेयरमैन साहब के रेजोल्यूशन पर कोई अमेंडमेंट नहीं होना चाहिए।

MR. CHAIRMAN: What you are all saying is included in the reference I have made. This is the substance.

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Facilities provided by Pakistan to Indian Pilgrims Visiting Mata Temple, Karachi

* 141. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:
SHRI SANJAY DALMIA:†

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any agreement with Pakistan for providing facilities to the Indian pilgrims visiting Hinglaj Devi Mata Temple situated near Karachi; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) The India-Pakistan Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines, 1974 allows visits by pilgrims of one country to those shrines located in the other which have been mutually agreed upon by the two countries.

Government have urged the Government of Pakistan to open more shrines, including Mata Hinglaj Devi Temple, to pilgrims from India under the bilateral Protocol. Pakistan has not yet responded to the proposal.

SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: Mr. Chairman, Sir, may I know which are the shrines which are included under the Indo-Pakistan Protocol of 1974, on our side and on their side? This is one thing. Secondly, may I know whether it is possible to include or delete a particular shrine if the total number of shrines is to be restricted to a certain figure? I would like to know whether, under the Protocol, one can include or delete a particular shrine.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as the number of shrines is concerned, the number of shrine, which have been agreed to be opened by us for the Pakistani pilgrims is six. The shrines in Pakistan which have been agreed to be opened for the pilgrims from India number fifteen, including one shrine, one Muslim shrine, i.e. the shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Val-allah Lahore. Out of this, eleven are Sikh shrines and four are Hindu shrines. If the hon. Member is interested in knowing the names of these shrines, I am do it, but it would take time. Therefore, I would like to lay it on the Table of the House.

In regard to addition or deletion from the list, it is possible, provided both sides agree. For example, we had requested

†Question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Sanjay Dalmia.

Pakistan to open the Hinglaj shrine, but Pakistan has not agreed to open it.

SHRI SANJAY DALMIA: From what the hon. Minister has just now said, I find that the number of shrines on our side is higher than on the Pakistani side. In terms of this Protocol, was it not fair that the number of shrines on both sides should have been equal? This is one thing. Secondly, the question of inclusion or deletion, according to the number of shrines being higher or lower, should be automatic, as per the Protocol. Why should it not be done on this basis, that if the number is unequal, the addition or deletion would be automatic.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, it cannot be done arithmetically. It depends upon the demand from the people. A large number of shrines, particularly Sikh shrines, are located in Pakistan, and Sikh and Hindu pilgrims are interested in visiting them. In fact, the Member's contention is totally opposite. More shrines in Pakistan have been opened to Hindu pilgrims than the number of shrines in India opened to Muslim pilgrims from Pakistan. Their number is six, and the shrines which are opened to Hindu and Sikh pilgrims in Pakistan are 15. And there cannot be any automaticity because, when the protocol was signed in 1974, a large number of places were referred to and both sides agreed to identify places which were considered to be important, and even the number of pilgrims is being determined. For example, since 1992 nobody has come from Pakistan. They have not encouraged it. Similarly, as mentioned, about certain other shrines. About Mata Hinglaj Devi, they say that it is located in Baluchistan at such a place where, normally, visitors are not allowed to go; therefore, they are not opening it.

श्री कृष्ण लाल शर्मा: सभापति महोदय, मैं आपके माध्यम से मंत्री महोदय से पूछना चाहता हूं कि उन्होंने यह कहा है कि हमने कुछ और शराईस के बारे में या पवित्र स्थानों के बारे में अनुमति मांगी है। मैं यह जानना चाहता हूं कि पाकिस्तान ने या भारत ने जो नये शराईस या धार्मिक स्थान है जिनके बारे में अनुमति मांगी है, उनके नाम क्या हैं, उनकी संख्या क्या है, इसके बारे में भी बता दें। एक छोटा सा और बता दें कि जो भारत और पाकिस्तान के संबंध थोड़े बहुत बिगड़ रहे हैं, इस के कारण से इन धार्मिक स्थानों में आने जाने वाले जत्थों की संख्या घट रही है या बढ़ रही है या इसका क्या प्रभाव पड़ रहा है?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, so far as the number is concerned, it is, more or less, 30. Of course, sometimes it happens that we receive the permit very late. Therefore, the pilgrims from here cannot go because these are fixed dates. Suppose you get the visas just one or two days before, sometimes it happens, our people cannot reach there. There have been some cases. The number of pilgrims, normally, for example, in Baisakhi which is in the month of April, is 3,000. Then, Martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev, in May-June, is roughly 1,000. Then, Barsi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, 500. Birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji, which is in the month of November, 3,000. It is true that recently there have been some problems because visas and other facilities, which are being cleared, are communicated to us very late. Therefore, from the Indian side they cannot organize it. In regard to the names of these shrines, I have already mentioned that Pakistan is not preprared to open any new shrines. They have made it quite clear. For example, we wanted to have Mata Hinglaj Devi. The names, as I mentioned, I would like to lay on the Table. But, if the hon. Members are interested, I can give the names of the shrines which are opened in Pakistan. Gurudwara Shri Nankana Saheb, Rawalpindi, Gurudwara Shri Panja Saheb...

श्री कृष्णलाल शर्मा: मैं नये और ओपन करने के लिए पूछा था।

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: From our side we wanted Mata Hniglaj Devi, but from their side they have not asked for any. And, as I have mentioned, even to the six which are opened to them, from 1992 no pilgrims have come.

श्री कृष्ण लाल शर्मा: सभापति महोदय, आपने संख्या के बारे में बताया। मैं सिर्फ यह जानना चाहता हूं कि बीसा की प्रोब्लम तो अलग है, वह समझ सकते हैं लेकिन भारत और पाकिस्तान के संबंध जो कभी बिगड़ते हैं या अच्छे होते हैं तो उसका कोई प्रभाव इस पर है या नहीं?

SRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, it would be difficult to say whether it is because of the deteriorating situation or whether it is being done deliberately to avoid. That is some sort of a subjective judgement. But, from the Pakistan side, since 1992 nobody has come. From our side, both Hindus and Sikhs are going and the numbers are, more or less, static.

श्री अनन्तराय जायसवाल: मान्यवर, मंत्री जी ने अपने जवाब में बताया कि सन् 1974 में यह समझौता हुआ था। तब से अब तक प्रश्नगत मन्दिर की यात्रा के लिए भारतीयों की तरफ से कितनी बार प्रार्थना की गयी अतः आपने इस सिलसिले में क्या कार्यवाही की है?

Am I clear, Sir?

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, they have not agreed to open it. I have mentioned it.

SHRI BALBIR SINGH: I want to know from your goodself whether the protocol agreement of 1974 includes maintenance of shrines because most of the Sikh shrines in Pakistan are in a very dilapidated condition.

SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE: Sir, the responsibility of maintaining the shrines lies with the various management committees which are in charge of the shrines, and the local Government are expected to provide the necessary logistic support as and when it is demanded. Therefore, through protocol, we cannot enforce anything about their maintenance.

*142. *[The Questioner (Shri S. Austin) was absent. For answer vide Col. 32 infra]*

Census of Indian citizens residing abroad

*143. SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Indian citizens residing in the countries where we have diplomatic representation;

(b) whether a census of such expatriate citizens is arranged on a regular basis; and

(c) whether arrangements are on the anvil for ensuring that Indians living abroad are enabled to cast their votes during Parliamentary elections?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The total number of overseas Indians which includes Indian citizens settle abroad as also the persons of Indian origin who have taken foreign citizenship, is nearly 14 million.

(b) There is no provision for conducting any census for such expatriate citizens.

(c) No, Sir.

In addition to that I want to share some information at this stage itself with the hon. Members because I got this information late and I could not put it in the printed form, that of these 14 million the number of Indian citizens is 3 million.

SHRI ASHOK MITRA: Sir, I am grateful for the additional information which the Minister has provided but I am still partly amused and partly intrigued. If there is no regular census, how can he be so sure that the total number of Indian citizens is 3 million? I will let that pass. I assume that is is a guess work.

The reason why I am raising this issue is that, of these 3 million—I am taking the Minister's figure—the overwhelming